

the tribes occupying the various areas could have taken over the legends associated with the locations.

#### b) The Joseph story

While it is obvious that, in its present form, the Joseph story acts as a link between the early Patriarchal traditions and the Exodus story, it is necessary to ask what the purpose of the original author was. It is difficult to believe that the Joseph story could be completely the invention of a person living in the Solomonic period, though the final version may belong to that time. Who wrote the first Joseph story, and why?

The Egyptian flavour of the story is generally accepted and the story is presented as a record of events in Egypt prior to the time of Moses. Perhaps a lever for opening the first stratum lies in the way of life of the slaves in the brickworks of Egypt. The poor and oppressed always have dreams. The Cinderella type of story is commonly produced in such circumstances and Joseph, as the Hebrew boy who made good, fits the pattern. Also, no doubt, the aetiological element is present in the explanation of how the Hebrews came to be in Egypt.

One outstanding feature of the Joseph story is the alternative use of the names Jacob and Israel for the third patriarch. It is true that the name Israel does appear in Genesis before the Joseph story, but only in a secondary way. The answer to this problem lies in the tribal traditions of those Hebrews who were enslaved in Egypt. It is postulated that there were two tribal groups, one called Jacob and the other Israel. Each tribe claimed descent from Abraham, as many other Semitic tribes did. It may be that the two names, Israel and Jacob(-el) are dialectal variations of the same name, which would mean that the tribes were closely related.

During the Wilderness Period the story was presumably expanded, and at some stage the Israel group of tribes split into the Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) and Benjamin tribes. Similarly the Jacob group of tribes split into the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Reuben (with possibly Issachar and Levi, though these probably joined the alliance at a later date). These divisions may have existed in some sense even earlier than this, though probably not as distinct tribal units, (cf. Ex 18 14-27). The aetiological element was then expanded to show that these tribes were sons of Jacob/Israel through Rachel and Leah respectively. (This is not necessarily to deny the historicity of Rachel and Leah, nor of Jacob/Israel.) A little later other tribes joined the group and had to be given an ancestry to fit into the tribal alliance. Hence, the children of Bilhah (Dan and Naphtali) and Zilpah (Gad and Asher) were added to the genealogy.

The tendency to underrate Moses as a creative personality is one result of the rejection of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Surely, however, Moses as the founder of a nation and a religion, had the imagi-

nation to adapt the existing ingredients of a commonly accepted line of descent from Abraham, and a germinal Joseph story, to create the family genealogy as a means of binding the group of tribes together, and then to bind the whole into a tribal legend as part of his policy in building a new nation.

Undoubtedly further additions took place. For example, the context in Chapter 37 is Shechem, which would appear to be a strand from the Settlement Period. Similarly, the Beersheba strand in Chapter 46 probably indicates that the story circulated in that area at a later date. To be sure, the story was probably given its near to final form after the process of collection and possibly during the reign of Solomon. It is part of the thesis of this essay that a historian, who for convenience will be called the Annalist, worked in the reign of Solomon to produce a tribal history of his people up to his own day. He may, indeed, have been the official annalist with the responsibility of keeping yearly records. Perhaps Solomon also commissioned him to produce a national history (cf. I Reg 4 1-5). However, the Annalist will be discussed below.

#### c) The Moses tradition

The conclusion that Moses probably used the Joseph story as a political tool raises the whole question of his life and work, about which there is often a disturbing vagueness. This is partly due to the reluctance of some scholars to accept that Moses could have contributed any substantial amount of material to the Exodus-Numbers tradition as it has survived (excluding Deuteronomy and Leviticus for the purposes of this debate). The quest for the historical Moses has not been pursued with any persistence and yet, perhaps the most important question that can be asked about this man is, »What did he actually create and achieve?«

In order to answer this question it is necessary to adjust the perspective so that it is remembered that the researcher is investigating the work of a creative genius whose religious and political foundations have influenced the thought of the world and several major religions for thousands of years. What kind of person could do that. The answer, surely, is a very exceptional one – and this ought to be the starting point for any investigation into the Mosaic cycle of traditions.

Like Saint Paul, Moses was eminently qualified for the vocation to which he was called. Not only was he steeped in the ancient traditions of the Semitic tribes through his mother, he was also educated in royal protocol, diplomatic affairs, complex religious ceremonies and the ancient history of the Egyptian people. Further, hardship during his time as an outlaw, induction into Kenite religious practice, a practical education for survival in desert conditions and the experience of the shepherd's life combined to complete his preparation for his life's work. He was a man of